

6949

Committee on PUBLIC HEALTH
Testimony Against Raised H.B. No. 6949 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILDHOOD
VACCINATIONS

By Ariana Rawls Fine
Stratford, CT
Submitted March 20, 2015

Senator Terry Gerratana, Representative Matt Ritter and members of Public Health Committee. My name is Ariana Rawls Fine. I am a concerned parent and Connecticut resident and I am writing testimony against HB 6949.

I oppose this proposed bill because it violates parents and guardians' First Amendment rights to free exercise of their religious beliefs. Parents should not be required to sign an incriminating statement in order to claim their legal right to a religious exemption. There is the added layer that they are being asked to sign and notarize a document saying that they understand the medical risks as dictated by the Department of Health. What does their understanding of the perceived risk information have to do with their religious beliefs?

The questions also arise as to what purpose the notarized statement may be used in the future and whether it will be used against parents during legal proceedings with DCF, custody battles and other unforeseen situations. What will be done with these notarized statements? Who will have access to them? Will they be public? What is the real purpose behind this proposed bill?

We have freedom of religion in this country and the freedom of choice as to how we practice our religion. If we start chipping away selectively at that freedom of choice for the perceived "greater good" of society, are we not inching towards a more communist way of thinking when it suits us?

Please vote against this bill.

Thank you for your time, consideration and service,
Ariana Rawls Fine